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**Letter dated 16 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General**

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to the note verbale dated 27 October 2016 from the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/71/581) and its enclosure, I have the honour to state the following:

1. The signatories of the letter accused Iran baselessly, as usual, of pursuing "expansionist regional policies" and claimed, equally baselessly, that Iran's Constitution "calls for export of revolution to other countries". To give an example of expansionist policy, let me refer to the incitement and full support of most signatories of the letter to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran by all possible military and financial means. In addition, it is absurd and hypocritical for the officials of some countries whose fighter jets are bombing innocent civilians in Yemen to accuse Iran of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries.

2. By accusing Iran of sponsoring terrorism without a shred of evidence, the signatories of the letter are imitating in a childish way a baseless accusation against Iran by a power, sidestepping the fact that that accusation stems exclusively from Iran's support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It is also farcical to witness a few regimes who have been exporting a host of extremist, takfiri ideologies for decades and funding and arming terrorists in Iraq and Syria and in many other places, to accuse Iran of sponsoring terrorism.

3. The accusation against the Islamic Republic of Iran of interfering in Yemen, again without a shred of evidence, is as baseless as the other accusations. Some of the signatories of the letter know much better how effectively they have imposed a siege on Yemen and its people, much like the one imposed on Gaza, and how effectively they are bringing devastation to an already impoverished people. It is then farcical that they accuse Iran of supporting "the Houthis in Yemen financially, strategically and militarily, by training Houthi fighters and sending shipments of weapons and ammunitions into the country". Isn't it really farcical?



4. Accusing Iran of interfering into Bahrain's domestic affairs is another obvious lie. Suffice it just to remind the signatories of the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, set up by the Bahraini Government, known also as the Bassiouni report, which reads in part: "The evidence presented to the Commission by the Government of Bahrain on the involvement by Iran in the internal affairs of Bahrain does not establish a discernable link between specific incidents that occurred in Bahrain and Iran." This should be enough to discredit any claim of Iranian intervention in any country.

5. With regard to Iran's military advisory assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic, I would like to recall that this assistance is provided on the basis of the request by the legitimate Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. This request is in full conformity with international law and the right of self-defence as stipulated in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is becoming further clear that if it were not for our support and the support of others for the legitimate Syrian Government, the bands of criminals, motivated by the takfiri ideology and organized, armed, funded and logistically supported by some of the signatories of the letter, would have by now planted their black flags everywhere in Syria and in some other parts of the Middle East, including on the soil of some of the signatories of the letter.

6. This letter also accuses Iran of politicizing the Mena disaster in September 2015, in which the precious lives of around 500 Iranian pilgrims and many more from other countries perished. We have always hoped that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would at some point adopt a responsible approach to this disaster — sadly they have not. We note, with concern, that any findings from the local investigation on the tragedy, if any, are yet to be released. Our legitimate request for a thorough, transparent and independent investigation on the causes of this tragedy through a committee in which the representatives of the affected countries could participate has so far fallen on deaf ears. We expect that minimum international standards be followed to enhance the management of the Hajj pilgrimage in a way to avoid repeated deadly accidents and to take effective actions to redress the situation. Could these fair and straightforward requests be really considered as "politicizing" the case?

7. On the unilateral claim by the United Arab Emirates over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its consistent and principled position that it does not recognize the existence of any such dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates; the three islands have been an inseparable part of Iranian territory and, therefore, any claim to the contrary is categorically rejected. Nonetheless, and to show its utmost respect for the principle of good neighbourliness, Iran has always expressed its readiness to talk with the United Arab Emirates bilaterally with a view to removing any misunderstanding that may exist on the part of the United Arab Emirates over Abu Musa Island.

8. As to the correct name of the body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, we recall that the traditional term "Persian Gulf" has been the correct appellation for this body of water from around 500 years before Christ and will remain so forever. It is a standardized geographical term, recognized by the

international community, including the United Nations, and should not be tinkered with due to political projects and daily wishes of this or that ruler.

9. Last but not least, we have always endeavoured towards the removal of tension in our region and developing friendly and good-neighbourly relationships with our neighbours, including those in the Persian Gulf. We have always reiterated our interest in and called for dialogue with a view to dispelling misunderstandings and restoring friendly relations that our peoples mostly enjoyed throughout history.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated to all States Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Gholamali Khoshroo
Ambassador
Permanent Representative